DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 059 466 AC 012 338

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TITLE The Prediction of Recidivism: The Environmental Deprivation Scale (EDS), a Method of Assessing Degree of Environmental Deprivation and Behavioral Deviancy.
INSTITUTION Rehabilitation Research Foundation, Elmore, Ala. Draper Correctional Center.
PUB DATE 1 May 71
NOTE 8p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Behavioral Science Research; Behavior Change; Behavior Problems; Behavior Rating Scales; Comparative Analysis; *Correctional Rehabilitation; Data Analysis; *Environmental Influences; *Evaluation Methods; Interpersonal Competence; Predictive Validity; Problem Solving; Psychopathology; Rating Scales; *Recidivism; Standards
IDENTIFIERS EDS; *Environmental Deprivation Scale

ABSTRACT

A methodology for the assessment and prediction of recidivism in terms of degree or extent of environmental deprivation or support is presented. The Environmental Deprivation Scale (EDS) was employed as an objective means of assessing environmental circumstances in a group of recidivists as contrasted with non-recidivists. The EDS consists of a check list of 16 behavioral items dealing with everyday functioning in the areas of occupation, institutional activities and interpersonal relations. In the present study a total of 74 releasees from Draper Correctional Center were followed up in their postrelease life. The present report contains the detailed comparison of recidivists and non-recidivists on the EDS along with additional information on the discriminatory power of the EDS in other forms of behavioral deviancy. The data show that there is appreciable separation in EDS performance of recidivists and nonrecidivists. Recidivists show a high degree of environmental deprivation while the nonrecidivists show a much greater degree of environmental support. Thus, the EDS serves as a detection device as well as a criterion of degree of deprivation and an indicator of the extent of behavioral deviancy. (CK)

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May 1, 1971

THE PREDICTION OF RECIDIVISM

The Environmental Deprivation Scale (EDS), a Method of Assessing Degree of Environmental Deprivation and Behavioral Deviancy

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THE PROBLEM

Criminal action is accepted as a form of deviant behavior and, as such requires the same kind of behavior analysis as other forms of deviancy. A major aspect of criminal behavior is recidivism in which an individual is sentenced to jail or prison for the commission of a second or additional criminal action.

One of the most basic dimensions of criminal behavior including recidivism pivots on the environmental circumstances associated with the execution of the second or further criminal act. In the present investigation, a methodology is employed for the assessment and prediction of recidivism in terms of degree or extent of environmental deprivation or support.

METHODOLOGY

The Environmental Deprivation Scale (EDS), was employed as an objective means of assessing environmental circumstances in a group of recidivists as constracted with non-recidivists. The Deprivation Scale was originally developed by Pascal & Jenkins (1961) to assess the degree of environmental deprivation involved in studies of surgical intervention in duodenal ulcer and skidrow alcoholism. The EDS consists of a check list of 16 behavioral

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items dealing with everyday functioning in the areas of occupation, institutional activities and interpersonal relations. Each item of the EDS is forced-choice, being scored either 0 for presence of support of 1 for presence of deprivation or absence of support. The 16 items of the deprivation scale are as follows:

1. employment, 2. income, 3. debts, 4. job participation, 5. job status, 6. status - other, 7. education, 8. residence, 9. church, 10. other organizations, 11. friends, 12. relatives, 13. parents, 14. wife, 15. children, and 16. fear

The crux of the EDS lies in the employment of the Behavioral Incident technique described in detail by Pascal and Jenkins (1961). In this technique, precise objective behavioral descriptions of actual daily activities are obtained so that the items of the EDS can be objectively and validly scored. When such BIs are obtained, the reliability of the EDS is high, with overall agreement between independent judges running close to perfect.

In the present study a total of 74 releasees from Draper Correctional Center were followed up in their postrelease life. At the time of report preparation, 34 of these men had recidivated and the remaining 40 had not. In the course of followup on these men the EDS was executed. The present report contains the detailed comparison of recidivists and non-recidivists on the EDS along with additional information on the discriminatory power of the EDS in other forms of behavioral deviancy.

FINDINGS

The basic data of the EDS are summarized in Table 1 separately for the recidivists and nonrecidivists samples. Figure I shows the same information presented graphically. From these representations, it is immediately obvious that there is appreciable separation in EDS performance of recidivists and

nonrecidivists. In terms of the underlying dimension of the EDS, the recidivists show a high degree of environmental deprivation while the nonrecidivists show a much greater degree of environmental support.

The lower portion of table 1 shows the separation of EDS scores at the grand mean into high scores (equal to and above 9) and low scores (equal to or less then 8). It is immediately obvious in this representation that nearly 95% of recidivists score above the grand average, while 75% of the nonrecidivists scores below the grand average indicating an appreciable separation of the two groups. The Phi Coefficient for this 2x2 table is .70 indicating appreciable covariation between EDS score and presence or absence of recidivism.

Separate validation was accomplished for the clusters of items on the EDS dealing with occupational matters, institutional activities, interpersonal relationships and "fear." The Phi Coefficients for these four categories respectively, were .65, .45, .58, and .40. Occupational and interpersonal items exhibit the highest degree of validity in predicting the criterion of recidivism. It might be noted in passing that all items of the deprivation scale except two showed significant individual item validities. The most significant ones of course, were those in the occupational and interpersonal areas. The two that failed to discriminate were education and organizations. The lack of validity of the former is probably attributable to the educational training program at the prison and the absence of validity for organization seems due to the fact that none of the men are active in organizational activities.

The intercorrelations of the item clusters range from about .00 to about .50 with the median slightly less than .40. Such an outcome indicates that

the clusters are measuring different aspects of environmental deprivation and support.

The EDS has been used in a variety of studies by different investigators. These EDS data are summarized in Table 2 and Figure II which present the mean EDS scores for different forms of behavioral deviancy ranging from skidrow alcoholism through ulcer intractibility and schizophrenia to control cases not exhibiting any form of behavioral deviancy. The broad applicability of the EDS as an indicator or weathervane of degree of behavioral deviancy is amply supported by the evidence of these representations. Even in the extreme cases of individuals who are showing a lesser degree of deprivation and a greater ability to cope with their environmental problems, e.g., schizophrenics and middle class alcoholics, their EDS score runs more than twice as high as control Ss who exhibits no identifiable behavioral deviancy pattern. It might be noted in passing that the EDS scores represented in Table 2 and Figure II correlate almost perfectly with behavioral indications of early-life deprivation in these several studies.

DISCUSSION

Results of this investigation indicate a clear-cut differentiation of recidivists from nonrecidivists in terms of the extent of environmental support or deprivation characterizing the two groups. The findings with the EDS in this and related forms of behavioral deviancy constitute not a terminal point but a springboard into programs of intervention. By noting areas of deprivation and deficit, an indication is given for areas in which behavioral intervention is required. Thus the EDS serves as a detection device as well as a criterion of degree of deprivation and an indicator of the extent of behavioral deviancy. It offers a generalized methodology that can be employed in a variety of studies of human behavior in its natural habitat.

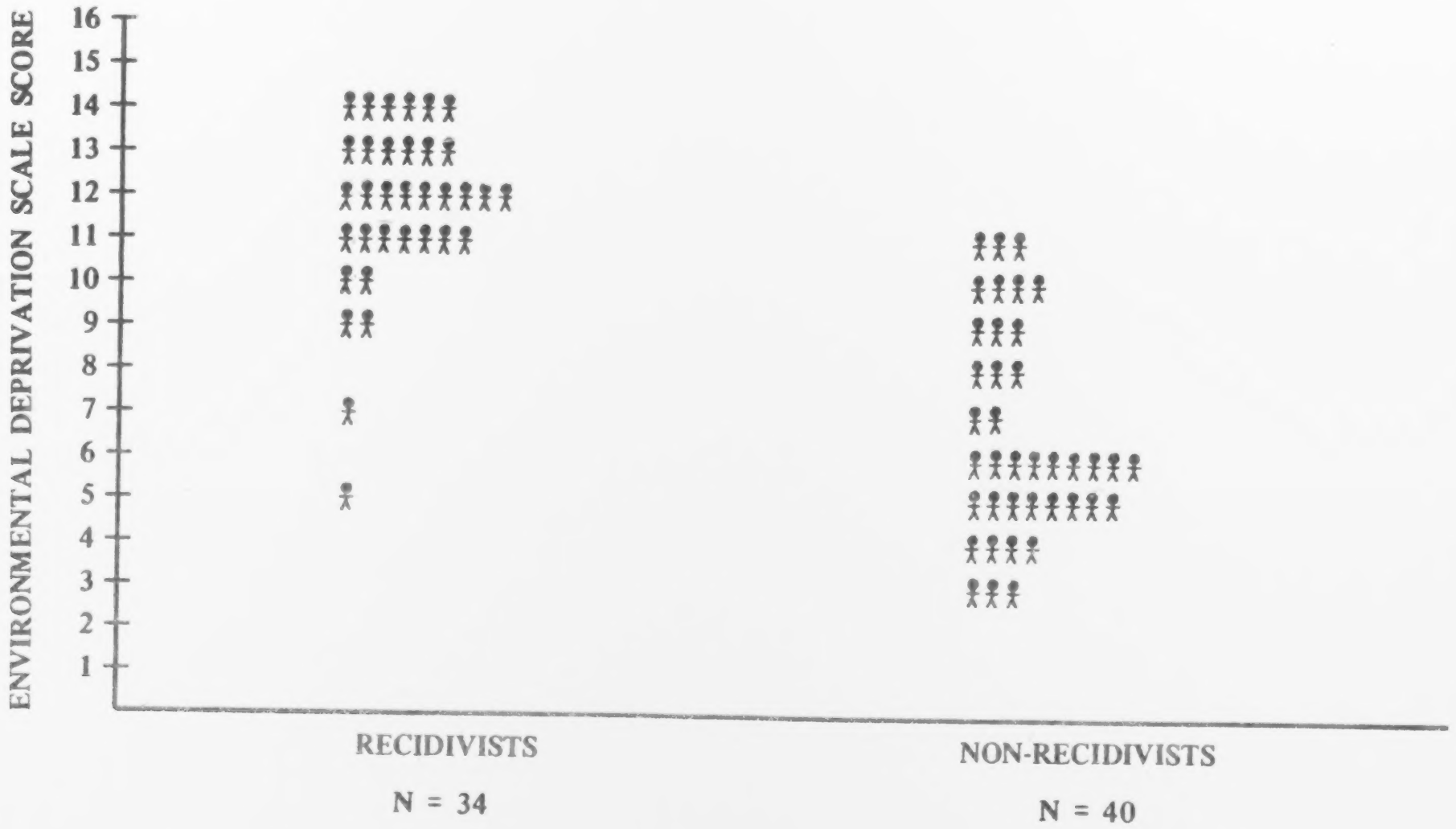
TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF EDS SCORES FOR REVIDIVISTS AND NON-RECIDIVISTS

EDS SCORE	RECIDIVISTS N=34	NON-RECIDIVISTS N=40
14	6	0
13	6	0
12	9	0
11	7	3
10	2	4
9	2	3
8	0	3
7	1	2
6	0	9
5	1	8
4	0	5
3	0	3
Mean	11.07	6.6
Median	12.0	6.0
Range	5-14	3-11

EDS SCORE	RECIDIVISTS	NON-RECIDIVISTS
9	32	10
8	2	40

0 = .70
p = <.0001



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL DEPRIVATION SCALE (EDS) SCORE AND RECIDIVISM

TABLE 2

EDS SCORES FOR DIFFERENT FORMS OF BEHAVIORAL LEARNING

Behavioral Deviancy	N	Mean EDS Score
Skidrow alcoholics	19	12.6
Prison Recidivists	34	11.7
Non-Ulcer Intractables	10	10.3
Ulcer Intractables	59	10.0
Schizophrenia	20	8.1
Middle-class Alcoholics	10	7.6
Terminal Cancer	10	7.5
Prison Non-Recidivists	80	6.7
Controls	89	3.4

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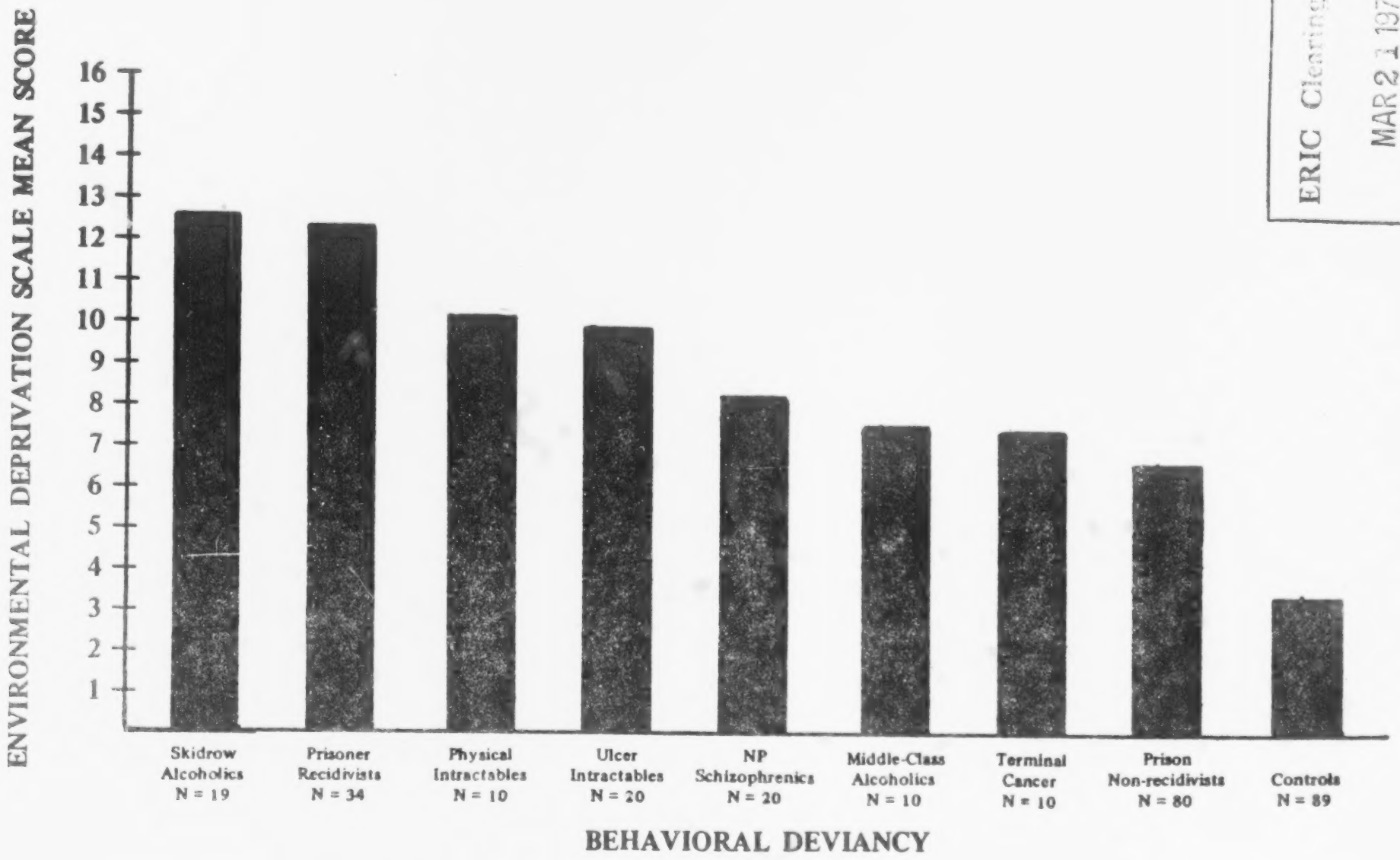

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEAN ENVIRONMENTAL DEPRIVATION SCALE SCORE AND VARIOUS FORMS OF BEHAVIORAL DEVIANCY